

Written Testimony to the Public Health Committee
In Support of Raised Bill 7161
March 5, 2007

My name is Karen Mera. I am a Nurse Practitioner and a resident of Norwich, Connecticut. I am writing to ask for your support of Raised Bill No. 7161, "An Act Revising the Definition of Advanced Nursing Practice."

As a family nurse practitioner student at Yale University School of Nursing, the title of our main textbook was *Primary Care: A Collaborative Practice*, written by four nurse practitioners. Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs) are taught the importance of collaboration with other healthcare providers from the very beginning of their training. As you know, research has again and again shown that health care provided by APNs is competent, caring and economical. In my opinion, this is partly due to the fact that APNs know how to work with their colleagues in other healthcare disciplines to help their patients get the best care and experience the best outcomes. In other words, advance practice nurses know how to collaborate.

In my personal practice as a family nurse practitioner, I collaborate with other healthcare providers on a daily basis. This includes not only my collaborating physician, but other APNs, psychiatrists, nurses, physical therapists, social workers, MD specialists, radiologists, and providers from other disciplines, depending on what my patients need that day. In fact, I collaborate more often with other healthcare providers than with the physician who signed my collaborative agreement. The revisions in this bill will not change the way I practice.

These revisions, will, however, improve care for patients of APNs across the State of Connecticut. With the current definition of advanced nursing practice, patients are at risk of losing their APN provider if he/she cannot maintain a collaborative agreement, even for reasons beyond his/her control. APNs in private practice risk losing their investments if they lose their physician collaborator. Physicians feel they may be put at risk for malpractice claims filed by patients of the APNs they collaborate with if they sign collaborative agreements, and this can make it difficult for APNs to find collaborating physicians. The State license for APNs entrusts us with patient care, and whether or not we have a formal collaborative agreement does not affect the quality of the care that we provide.

If this bill is passed, Connecticut will join 25 other states in not requiring written physician collaboration for APN practice. I am not aware of any evidence from these other states that patient care has been compromised because APNs do not have collaborative agreements, but instead collaborate freely with healthcare providers from all disciplines.

I encourage you to support this bill and positively impact healthcare delivery in the State of Connecticut.